

Hiawatha, KS

Ida Mae Hooper, 94, went home to be with her God Monday afternoon, May 8, 2017, at Vintage Park Assisted Living Apartments in Hiawatha.

Ida Mae Ploeger was born March 11, 1923, at Robinson, KS, one of four daughters born to the late William August Christian and Minnie Celesta Ruth Ploeger and had lived all of her life in Northeast Kansas. She grew up near Hiawatha where she attend Central School, Hiawatha Junior High School, later graduated Hiawatha High School with the class of 1941, where she was one of the first active members of National Honor Society. Ida Mae attended and completed a business course with Chillicothe Business College, Chillicothe, Missouri. It was during World War II, she worked at Hanna Rubber Company in Kansas City.

She married Leonard "Keith" Hooper, July 29, 1945 at First United Methodist Church of Hiawatha. They farmed and operated a dairy east of Hiawatha all of their married life until Keith's unexpected death in 1976. Ida Mae not only was a dedicated farm wife, she also worked as a flexible clerk/carrier for seventeen years for the Hiawatha Post Office. She loved to travel especially with family. She traveled the world: to Europe with a friend Esther Knoche, to Turkey and Australia to visit Bob, to Germany to see Casee, Alaska cruise, Panama Canal cruise, and Mediterranean Sea cruise.

Mrs. Hooper was very dedicated to her Church, First United Methodist Church of Hiawatha, was a very important part of her life: was a Choir member for 31 years; first grade school Sunday school teacher for 25 years; secretary of the Choir, secretary of Esther Circle; Sunday school class officer; and a Latchkey volunteer. She helped build a Sunday school building in Mexico.

Ida Mae was very active in her community: was a member of the ladies auxiliary to VFW Post #5210, Homer White Post #66, American Legion, both of Hiawatha, where served as an officer in both, as well as, president for many years. She was a member of the Sunshine Community Club (years ago); Senior Citizens Center; and Brown County Historical Society. She volunteered at the Hiawatha Community Hospital, delivered Meals-on-Wheels, and elementary school tutor. She also provided transportation for senior citizens to doctor appointments in Topeka/Kansas City, or KCII Airport.

When her children were small, she helped with Hiawatha Jayhawkers 4H Club where they were members. Through the years with the avenue of flags, she worked with Mt. Zion Rustlers 4-H Club to put out the flags at the cemetery for Memorial Day.

Ida Mae was a true patriot: gave speeches about the flag at the elementary school for many years. She, with the help of members from the Hiawatha VFW, started the "Avenue of Flags" at Mt. Hope Cemetery. A project she continued working on for over 25 years. At the death of a veteran, she would fly flags at the entrance of the cemetery, flags in honor of the veteran that was being buried, a service that continues today with the help of the Hiawatha American Legion.

She was also preceded in death by a daughter Ann Hall, two sisters: Ruth Carr, and Ruby Nolte.

Survivors include her children: Margaret (Larry) Goering of Newton, KS, Lela (Steve) Hewlett of Valparaiso, IN, Thomas (Beth) Hooper of Hiawatha, KS, Robert (Nancy) Hooper of Chicago, IL; 12 grandchildren; and 24 great-grandchildren. Also surviving is a son-in-law Ben Hall of Augusta; and a sister Margaret Spare of rural Hiawatha.

A Celebration of Ida Mae's life is planned for 11 a.m. Saturday, May 13, at First United Methodist Church of Hiawatha. Reverend Jacob Cloud will officiate. Interment will follow at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Hiawatha.

Friends may call at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home in Hiawatha after 10 a.m. Friday and where the family will meet with friends from 6 until 8 that evening.

Memorial contributions are suggested First United Methodist Church, Mt. Zion Rustler 4H Club, Avenue of Flags Fund for Mt. Hope Cemetery, Vintage Park Assisted Living, or NEK Multi-county Hospice, sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha 66434.

www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com